Learning to teach for equity: How context mediates preservice teacher learning

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Introduction

In this third paper in the Global Learning for Equity Network (GLEN) symposium, we explore contextual factors and elements that mediate the process within initial teacher education (ITE) of learning to teach for equity. To do this, we take the narratives that have been developed to illustrate University of Canterbury (UC) ITE programme requirements, regulations and policy contexts as a starting point for us to consider how context mediates process. This is addressed in two ways:

- Reflection on the process of the 'disruption', where outsiders provided questions on the UC narratives, and how reviewing the narratives and reading outsider views of the programmes offered by UC have prompted us to view our these programmes from a slightly different stance;
- Engagement with cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) as it helps to reveal and make sense of the mediating forces and tensions in the process of learning to teach for equity through a particular UC ITE programme, the Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn).

These two threads help us to look both from outside (in considering the questions posed by colleagues outside our national context) and from within (in engaging with mediating forces and tensions from positions within the system).

As teacher educators, we can never be outside of the social and political frameworks within which we live and work, although we can engage with outsiders' views of our work. In examining contextual elements that mediate processes of learning to teach for equity from our practice positioning, we offer initial and tentative thoughts on what we have learned about the interplay of contextual influences in our ITE programmes. In so doing, we make sense of mediating processes within ITE through *phronesis*, defined as practical wisdom derived from personal experience and deep understanding of context (Florian & Graham, 2014; Thomas, 2010), while at the same time hoping to achieve greater phronesis, in the sense of perceiving more (Florian & Graham, 2014) about our practice in ITE through processes of reflection on views from outside and experiences from within.

Context matters

As articulated in other papers within the GLEN symposium, researchers in the fields of comparative and international education have long grappled with the challenges associated with the 'transfer' or 'borrowing' of ideas between national contexts. In order to actually understand other ITE contexts, let alone be able to engage with ideas and share best practice across contexts, deep understanding is needed of social, cultural and political contexts in which ITE policies and practices are situated. Without this understanding, people can talk past each other as they make assumptions based on their own understandings of ITE policy environments and social, cultural and political contexts. Simply transferring practice from one national context to another without understanding how context mediates practice may not achieve the desired ends and may actually be counterproductive. Understanding what might or might not be desirable and transferable ITE policy and practices in relation to learning to teach for equity therefore requires attention to matters of context.

One of the challenges in thinking about context, though, is that some matters of context are not necessarily visible to those who work within a particular policy framework – they are implicitly known and accommodated by the actors but it can take someone from outside to help make some things visible to those actors. Another challenge relates to the multiple levels of contextual factors and dynamic interplay between these as they influence the shape of ITE programmes and practices (Chong & Graham, 2013) – the macro context (relating to international discourses and national policy frameworks), meso (relating to more local and institutional structures and influences), and micro (relating to individuals' circumstances and daily interactions). It is difficult to capture the complexity of contextual factors at all levels and to do so "requires the combination of a complex set of methodologies that are capable of sketching both broad and fine detail" (Chong & Graham, 2013, p.10). We seek to illuminate some of the complexity of the ecology of ITE in a particular setting. This research in combination with research by others in the GLEN is where a broader picture of the complexity of the international teacher education project may be generated.

Reflecting on questions about ITE programmes

Within the GLEN, one of the key objectives of us each producing narratives about our ITE programmes was to enable others to respond to these narratives and thereby enable us to gain outsider perspectives on our programmes. These perspectives were intended to be used as a 'disruption' to prompt us to adopt a slightly different stance in reflecting on our own programmes. We produced narratives relating to early childhood, primary and secondary teacher preparation within different types of ITE programmes for three different levels of ITE qualification: undergraduate degree; graduate diploma; and Masters degree. These were shared with other members of the GLEN. We received back questions from colleagues in other countries and requests for explanations of terms and concepts.

Responding to these questions from outsiders to our particular programme, who were not necessarily familiar with the New Zealand context, highlighted for us issues of language and labelling and the mediating influence of policy.

Issues of language and labelling

One of the initial reactions we had to some of the questions was 'Well, we thought that was obvious?' However, the fact that there was a question suggested that what we thought was obvious wasn't actually self-evident to one or more of our teacher education colleagues in other countries.

A number of the questions raised issues of language and labelling, where we may use the same words but mean different things, or where we use different words to describe the same thing. That our use of Māori concepts would raise questions about language and meaning was not surprising, but there were concepts that in writing the narratives we assumed were common usage but which were apparently not clearly understood by others. For example, in describing the levels of organisation of teaching elements within ITE programmes we needed to clarify our use of the concepts 'programme' (meaning combination or package of teaching elements) and 'course' (meaning paper or unit within a programme). Also, slippage in our reference to 'courses' was highlighted, where this could mean a programme or a paper. Sometimes we included a definition in a narrative, but we still received a question about the concept; for example, "Kura Kaupapa – a Māori immersion school". The assumption made by us was that the definition made sense and that colleagues would understand references to immersion schools (meaning schools where learners are immersed in a language, in this case te reo Māori). It may be that this concept did make sense to others and colleagues were just seeking confirmation of understanding, or the request for a definition of the term may have been not so much for a translation as for an elaboration on the place of Māori immersion schools historically within Aotearoa New Zealand policy frameworks and schooling structures. Regardless of questioner motivation, which we don't actually know, that there were many questions about language highlights for us the importance of being explicit about our use of language and labels.

Some language differences may carry connotations in one setting that may not be shared in another. For example, we prefer the language of 'professional practice experience' rather than 'practicum', because for us 'professional practice experience' better reflects the relational, critically reflective and experiential elements of pre-service (student) teachers' time in schools and early childhood centres and is consistent with our attempts to extend students experiences in educational contexts beyond traditional practicum placements. In answering the questions posed about time on practicums, our use of language and its significations was highlighted for us, even though the subtle differences in signification may or may not have been apparent to our colleagues and these differences may not have carried the same significance for them as for us. In reflecting on language use we are in

effect reflecting on the values and messages we wish to convey through the language that we use and how we try to shape and re-frame the discourse of ITE.

Mediating influence of policy

Many of the questions we received were seeking clarification about features and organisation of our programmes; for example, professional practice arrangements and relationships between the university and schools, selection procedures and criteria, the content and focus of particular courses, similarities and difference within qualifications relating to preparation of pre-service teachers to teach in particular sectors (early childhood, primary, secondary). There were also a variety of questions relating to the explicit focus on culturally responsive and inclusive practice within UC ITE programmes, and how this is realised through particular programme elements. A third cluster of questions related to the policy landscape and provider environment.

We find it hard to say how these questions in isolation made us see or understand our own programmes differently. Many questions were about points of fact and organisation, or about policy institutions and structures with which we are familiar. In answering these questions, we clarified points for others and did not necessarily feel like we were thinking more deeply about our own programme, why we do particular things, or where our 'blind spots' may be and how we might otherwise think about how we 'do' ITE. However, the associated and deeper process of thinking about the nature of the questions and our responses in the writing of this paper has focused our attention on why we do the things that we do and how we work within a particular system to implement a form of sanctioned resistance to technocratic or instrumentalist forms of teacher preparation.

Thinking about the policy environment, the questions we were asked by colleagues helped focus our attention on the extent to which a regulatory policy environment and accountability climate directs our ITE practice. We are subject to a range of regulatory frameworks, beginning with the accreditation of ITE programmes. The accreditation process involves approval proceedings managed by university organisations and the Education Council, which is a semi-autonomous government organisations. We are also subject to ongoing programme monitoring (by the Education Council). To obtain accreditation, programmes must ensure that pre-service teachers can meet mandated graduating teacher standards (GTS), and pre-service teachers need to meet these standards to obtain teacher registration and a provisional practicing certificate to be able to teach in New Zealand Schools (issued by the Education Council). To gain entry to ITE, candidates must meet requirements that are set within programmes but which are consistent with the policy guidelines set by the university (for university entrance and access to postgraduate qualifications) and the Education Council (for literacy and numeracy testing, interviews, subjects in degrees). Within programmes, there are imposed requirements for the minimum amount of time that pre-service teachers must spend in schools on professional practice

and for who can visit and provide mentor support (university mentors must be employed by the university and be registered teachers with a current practicing certificate). In the design of ITE programmes, attention needs to be given to ensuring how pre-service teachers will be able to achieve and provide evidence of having met the GTS. Some of the things that we do, we do because government policies and agencies say we must. However, we also try to work within these accountability frameworks to do the things that we think we ought.

For pre-service teachers, the policy regime influences choices for entry to particular UC ITE programmes. Entry depends on whether or not they meet the entry requirements (a direct policy effect) and on personal financial circumstances and whether or not scholarships, a living allowance, or a student loan, are available to them for particular programmes (a more subtle mediating government policy influence on access to ITE programmes). Prospective teachers also have options about where to undertake teacher education, as the New Zealand provider landscape includes private organisations (who may be for profit or not-for-profit), with a larger number of private providers operating in the early childhood area than in primary and secondary teacher preparation. So, depending on their mobility and financial circumstances, pre-service teachers have an element of choice about where they will get their teacher education; and providers, including UC, are in competition for student teachers to ensure the viability of their ITE programmes.

All of these policy features are mediating influences in the design of our ITE programmes. There are compliance imperatives for us to meet mandated ITE requirements and economic pressures to maintain student numbers in a competitive ITE environment. There is, for example, a strong economic imperative for us to maintain distance or flexible learning options (with a mixture of online learning and face-to-face intensives for courses, along with professional practice in schools) for students in selected ITE programmes. This economic imperative exists whether or not we feel that distance learning is the best way to learn to teach for all prospective teachers and acknowledging that there is also a social imperative to support distance options that make teaching education available to a wider range of people and support a more diverse teacher workforce.

Sanctioned resistance

Notwithstanding the regulatory frameworks and mandatory requirements for ITE programmes, the policy environment within which we work is set up to enable ITE providers to develop programmes with different foci and flavours as they compete with each other for students. For us, then, the key questions have been about what type of focus we want to have in our ITE programmes and the values on which we wish to base our programme development. In a sense, our responses to the policy environment for ITE programme development can be seen as a form of sanctioned resistance.

In recent programme developments that we have undertaken, specifically within the MTchgLn we have intentionally resisted instrumentalist or technocratic notions of ITE as 'training' or as formulaic practice that are popular in some political and educational quarters. We have attempted to strengthen theory and practices of culturally responsive and sustaining teaching, emphasise the relational elements involved in creating positive classroom learning environments, and include wider community-based learning experiences in ITE courses. Also, we have focused on the reflective elements of practice and teacher pre-service learning, where pre-service teachers critically reflect on real-life, in-context practice challenges, make sense of these in relation to their experiences and research literature, address their own assumptions about learners and teaching, and adjust their practice in response to new understandings. This is in contrast to approaches that may emphasis the acquisition of a set of teaching techniques and performance of a classroom management formula.

Our resistance, though, does not constitute fundamental opposition to the policy environment. Rather, it can be understood as a form of sanctioned resistance because our efforts have institutional support and are consistent with elements of government and university policy. At the local level of the university workplace, our attempts to shift the emphasis and focus within ITE are sanctioned by UC in-so-far as they help the university to meet economic and reputational goals and obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi[1] – to attract students and income to the university, enhance the university reputation locally and internationally, and assist the university to give effect to the principles of the Treaty, address Māori educational aspirations and improve educational outcomes for Māori and diverse learners. At the level of government policy, Māori and Pasifika education plans (Ministry of Education, 2013a, nd) articulate visions and broad goals for improving educational experiences and outcomes for Māori and Pasifika children and young people. A Ministry of Education request for applications from ITE providers for innovative and exemplary postgraduate ITE programmes included a requirement that new programmes include features "that will enable graduating teachers to develop the cultural responsiveness and agency to achieve equitable outcomes for students at most risk of

[1] The Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Chiefs of various iwi/tribes and representatives of the Crown in 1840. It paved the way for British settlement and a national government. Under the treaty, Māori are guaranteed rights and privileges, although the terms of the treaty and these rights were not always honoured. The treaty has legal status and principles of the treaty are included in educational policy. Schools are expected to ensure that Māori language and customs are valued and promoted in school management and teaching, all students have the opportunity to learn te reo Māori and understand and celebrate the place of Māori as tangata whenua/first people of the land, and relationships are established with parents, whānau/family, iwi/tribes and other community members that support Māori learners.

under achievement" (Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 4). Our focus on culturally responsive practice and inclusive education is thus endorsed through these policy networks.

In summary, then, the main point we make regarding our resistance to particular constructions of ITE is that we have been able to do this, and in some ways encouraged to do so, within the New Zealand education policy environment. Focusing on the counter factual question of whether we would be able to do this if the policy environment were different, the answer is 'maybe yes but not in the same way'. It would depend on the particular policy regime and the level of autonomy given to and exercised by ITE providers and individuals involved in programme development. Reflecting on questions from colleagues leads us to heightened awareness of the restricting and enabling mediating forces in the particular policy environment within which we develop our ITE programmes.

Mediating forces in MTchgLn revealed through CHAT

As alluded to in the reflection above, central to ITE at UC is a commitment to equity, particularly in relation to culturally responsive and sustaining practice. Focusing on the MTchgLn, a recently introduced professional Masters in ITE, provides a specific context for us to think about mediating forces and tensions in ITE as we work to help prepare pre-service teachers to learn to teach for equity in the form of culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy. We use CHAT to help us theorise some of the challenges we experience in negotiating policy and political and institutional landscapes to develop a more culturally responsive form of ITE. This is just our initial thinking about how our work is mediated within a particular activity system.

CHAT focuses attention on the cultural mediation of action within activity systems and the complex interactions between individuals and communities and between networks. According to Engestrom (2009), one of the key principles of activity theory is the "multi-voicedness of activity systems" (p. 56), which is a reference to the multiple traditions and interests that exist within activity systems and the divisions of labour (or responsibility) that create different positions for participants. This multi-voicedness can be a source of trouble and innovation. Thompson (2014) explains that CHAT research "does not simply describe how students and/or teachers act or behave within the activity system, but instead examinines processes of change as these actors encounter contradictions within problematic situations" (p. 24). CHAT can also help with understanding the constitution of the object (e.g. research, teaching, learning) by particular subjects (e.g. teacher, ITE lecturer or pre-service teacher) within school, tertiary education and ITE activity systems (see for example Berg, Gunn, Hill & Haigh, 2016).

We draw in particular on the CHAT concepts of the *object*, *object-motive* and *contradictions* to support our examination of the activity system relating to a particular ITE programme:

- *Object* of activity – the defining feature or problem that is being worked on;

- *Object-motive* – the purpose or motivation that calls forth particular responses of actors (Edwards, 2010);
- *Contradictions* – historically accumulating tensions that may act as sources of change, but which are not quite the same as a problem or conflict (Engestrom, 2009).

Within ITE, there may be an espoused object, such as improvement in teacher quality, but a range of different object-motives that may not necessarily be consistent with the object. These object-motives may relate to a range of factors, including compliance requirements, institutional goals, and positioning of people within the system. Historically accumulated tensions may exist, for example between aspirations of different communities for educational success and the supply through ITE of culturally and ethnically diverse teacher graduates. CHAT provides a lens for viewing decisions and processes within ITE and activity systems associated with particular ITE programmes, of which our MTchgLn is an example.

The culturally responsive object

The MtchgLn was introduced in response to the Ministry of Education (2013b) call for providers to create innovative and exemplary postgraduate ITE programmes. Responding to the requirements in the request for applications, the MTchgLn was developed with an intentional focus on culturally responsive practice. The culturally responsive object is the development of a programme for the preparation of culturally responsive pre-service teachers in the context of mainstream education. In the mainstream context, most teachers are predominantly white and middle class but they are increasingly called on to teach children and young people whose backgrounds and experiences are very different to their own.

It is beyond the scope of this conference paper to articulate in detail the theoretical foundations of culturally responsive practice, other than to say that our understanding is grounded in the work of international scholars and educationalists relating to culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2014) culturally sustaining and revitalising pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim 2014), and more specifically in the research and scholarship of New Zealand Māori and Pasifika educators relating to culturally responsive practice in the Aotearoa New Zealand (see for example Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al, 2009; Macfarlane, 2004; Samu, 2015). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, culturally responsive practice is framed in relation to the Treaty relationship between Maori and newcomers to the land, with a first (but not exclusive) responsibility to address the educational aspirations of Māori as the indigenous people of the land. However, the kinds of questions that are asked and the challenge posed for teachers to engage in more culturally relevant and sustaining ways of teaching for Māori are generally seen as beneficial for all learners, including Pasifika and recent immigrants.

Within ITE, a commitment to teaching for equity and in ways that are culturally responsive and sustaining involves attention to the dispositional, relational and valuing elements of learning to teach and to the practical or organizational elements of programme design. Central to culturally responsive practice is the conscious and intentional challenging of deficit discourses relating to learners and communities, accompanied by valuing of learners as knowledgeable people who bring unique and valuable culturally-located knowledge and experiences with them to school and classrooms. This has been theorized in relation to learners' 'funds of knowledge' (Cowie, Jones & Otrel-Cass, 2011; Moll, Amanti, Nef & Gonzalez, 1992). In the MTchgLn programme design, culturally responsive practice is supported through the infusing of Māori concepts and values across the programme, opportunities for community engagement in marae[2] contexts and under marae protocols, and through inclusion of two courses in the programme schedule specifically focused on supporting Māori educational success and inclusive education.

As intimated in our reflection on questions posed by GLEN partners and colleagues, the culturally responsive object is sanctioned through wider government policy. Also, there are potentially varied object-motives deriving from the divisions of labour and multiplicity of actors in the system. These actors include university leaders and MTchgLn programme lecturers, pre-service teachers, school leaders and teachers who act as mentor teachers for students for their school-based professional practice experiences. The object-motives of participants within the system may vary and sit both in alignment and in tension with each other and the culturally responsive object of the MTchgLn.

For example, our reflection on questions from outside suggest that different object-motives exist for university actors, which relate at one and the same time to an ethical commitment to supporting and enhancing culturally responsive practice through ITE, regulatory requirements (for programme accreditation and monitoring), and university financial and reputational aims. While there is a shared object-motive between government, university and teacher educators for enhancing pre-service teachers' culturally responsive practice, there is potential for conflict where this goal runs up against other goals, such as financial sustainability, and contested views about how ITE should be 'done'. There are, for example, different opinions about the extent to which learning to teach can be achieved through more generic courses or needs to be grounded in sector or curriculum specific situations. Programme development is therefore inevitably an exercise in negotiation and compromise. We can see this in the way we have organized courses to be taught to the whole MTchgLn cohort, which includes early childhood, primary and secondary pre-service teachers, with only the curriculum courses delivered to separate, sector-specific groups. While there are

[2] A marae in this context is a meeting area, made up of a complex of buildings and where the customs of the ancestors are maintained. See https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/3664.

sound educational reasons for doing this, relating to the relevance of cultural knowledge for all pre-service teachers and provision of opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn with and from colleagues in other sectors and thereby obtain deeper understanding of early childhood-primary and primary-secondary transitions, there is also a financial motivation. The MTchgLn is a boutique programme, with relatively small numbers of pre-service teachers, and weighting the balance towards common courses ensures its financial sustainability.

Focusing on the object-motives of pre-service teachers, other tensions can be perceived between the interests and motivations of those directing the progamme and participating pre-service teachers. For instance, pre-service teachers have object-motives to do what is required to pass their courses and to achieve a Masters level ITE qualification, which is only available through the MTchgLn and which impacts their starting salary in schools and future promotion or higher study opportunities. While pre-service teachers have a sincere interest in and commitment to developing culturally responsive practice (commitment to equity and inclusiveness is a dispositional element for selection to the MTchgLn), they also have other motivations. Thinking about assignment work in the programme, ITE lecturers may see the object of some assignments as being primarily to develop critical understanding of pedagogy and practice while pre-service teachers may experience assignments more intensely in relation to pressure to do what is required to pass or achieve high grades within a course. It behoves us, then, to be careful in interpreting pre-service teacher critical reflections on their practice and learning. We need to ask ourselves questions about how what pre-service teachers say may show their development of culturally responsive values and practice and at the same time reflect back to us what it is that pre-service teachers think we want to hear.

We have had demonstrable success working on the culturally responsive object; that is, in developing a Masters programme to prepare culturally responsive teachers for the mainstream (Fickel, Abbiss, Brown & Astall, In press). However, there is a deep-seated historical tension that presents to us, along with other ITE providers, relating to the broader educational goal of achieving greater equity in education. We address this tension in the next section.

Master level ITE and educational equity: A contradiction

The notion of educational equity is problematic. Equity for Māori and diverse learners relates to what and how they are taught and their educational achievement, but it also relates to and the extent to which the teacher workforce itself represents the culturally diverse population of Aotearoa New Zealand. Historically, Māori and Pasifika are under-represented in the teaching workforce (Jahnke, 1997; Walker, 2016) and there are persistent shortages of qualified teachers of te reo Māori and Pacific languages (TeachNZ,

nd). The majority of Māori and Pasifika children and young people are in mainstream schools and are taught by non-Māori and non-Pasifika teachers. While we feel relatively confident that the teachers graduating from our MTchgLn have knowledge and dispositions to teach in ways that are culturally relevant and sustaining, assuming that the schools or early childhood centres within which they work also foster culturally responsive practice, there is an ongoing challenge relating to cultural imbalance in the teaching workforce. We have had a number of Māori and Pasifika pre-service teachers participate in and graduate from the MTcghLn, but not as many as we would like.

Several factors potentially combine to limit participation of pre-service teachers in the MTchgLn. One factor is the cost of participation in Masters study. The fees are higher for the MTchgLn than other one-year ITE programmes and a compounding factor is government policy that denies MTchgLn pre-service teachers a living allowance. This government-provided financial support is available to students studying for undergraduate degree and graduate diploma ITE qualification, but not for Masters level study. There are, however, several TeachNZ scholarships available for Māori and Pasifika pre-service teachers and teachers in areas of subject shortage that mitigate the financial burden for eligible students. Another factor is the intensity of the MTchgLn programme, with 180 points of academic work and professional practice components completed in an extended academic year. This makes it difficult for participants in the programme to engage in part-time work and it may not be manageable for some people with family responsibilities. A third factor relates to academic entry requirements. The entry requirements for Masters level study, based on grade point average (GPA) scores, is higher than for other undergraduate and graduate ITE programmes. There are also likely to be other broader systemic elements in play that influence entry to ITE, for all pre-service teachers and Māori and Pasifika in particular. We don't know how many Māori and Pasifika students may have considered the MTchgLn but chosen not to pursue this ITE pathway, nor their reasons for such a decision. It is very difficult to get reliable information about students who do not apply for a programme. However, we do know that inequities in participation of Māori and Pasifika in teacher education persist.

The notion of Masters level ITE for educational equity thus presents a contradiction. A tension exists between aspirations to redress cultural imbalance in teaching and the supply of Māori and culturally diverse teacher graduates through ITE, and more specifically through the MTchgLn. The unresolved question is: What can we do about this? A CHAT perspective suggests that the multi-voicedness of ITE activity systems means that any responses to this question at the ITE programme level will inevitably involve the negotiation and balancing of different interests. Our position to date has been to maintain multiple ITE pathways, including a Masters pathway, to provide options for prospective teachers to enter the profession.

Summary

In reflecting on the questions from outsiders in the GLEN network about our ITE programmes and on tensions and contradictions negotiated within the MTchgLn in particular, the uniqueness of the social, political and institutional context within which our ITE programmes are grounded is highlighted. This uniqueness derives from the bi-cultural national foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand and historically accumulated educational inequities which have accrued particularly for Māori and Pasifika people and which operate at a deep social level. At the political policy and institutional levels, there are a range of regulatory frameworks that influence ITE programme development. The existence of such regulatory frameworks is not unique, given that many countries legislate for control over ITE practices, but this regulation is given particular expression in our national context.

The complexity of the ecology of contextual influences means that it is difficult to make sense of mediating influences in ITE. Many factors can have an influence on particular programme development decisions, ranging from deep social tensions to the values and preferences of particular individuals. We have found CHAT concepts useful to help us think about how we negotiate tensions and contradictions in a particular ITE programme that is focused on teaching for equity and through this to make sense of complex contextual influences in ITE.

In engaging with the mediating influences in ITE, we found that we were actually thinking about values – the values on which our ITE programmes are based, the values we want to convey through ITE programmes with an explicit emphasis on culturally responsive and sustaining practice, and how we take values positions as we negotiate tensions and contradictions within the ITE environment. We suggest that ITE research relating to how context mediates learning to teach for equity is valuable not so much for how it might catalogue these influences (although this is useful), but for how it invites engagement with questions around the purpose of ITE and how ITE might (or might not) support teaching for equity.

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